



# Nodwick™



THE TIDES OF

WAR



Nodwick

by Aaron

in:

# THE TIDES of WAR

...AND ALL WE KNOW IS THAT THE ORCISH ARMY IS COMING TO RAVAGE MY KINGDOM, PERCHANCE MOVING INTO BORDERING LANDS. I CANNOT AFFORD TO SPARE ANY OF MY MEAGER FORCES TO ENGAGE THEM...

SO I WISH TO HIRE YOU TO TRY AND HALT THEIR PROGRESS. I HEAR TELL THAT YOU ARE A RESOURCEFUL GROUP?

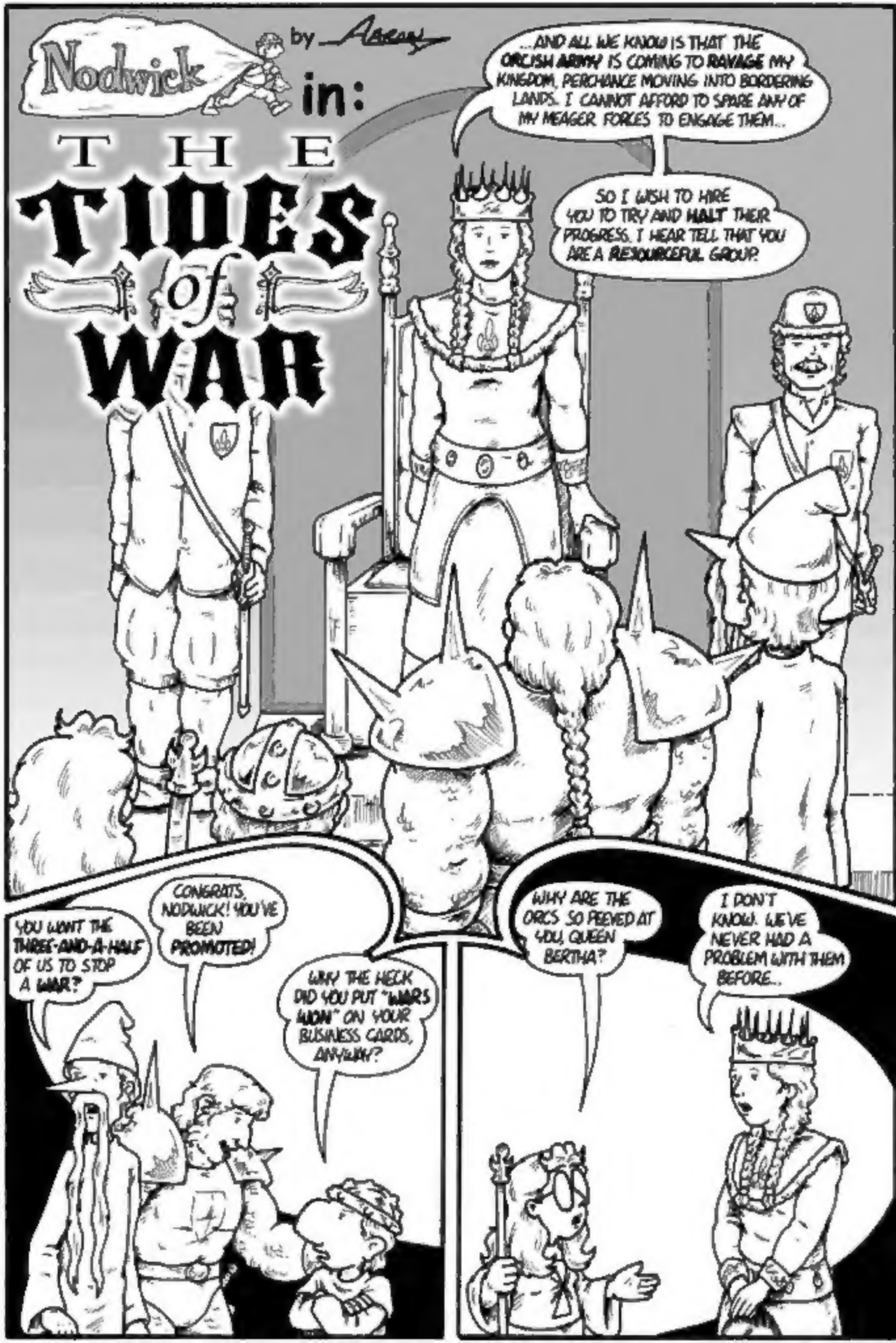
YOU WANT THE THREE-AND-A-HALF OF US TO STOP A WAR?

CONGRATS, NODWICK! YOU'VE BEEN PROMOTED!

WHY THE HECK DID YOU PUT "WARS WON" ON YOUR BUSINESS CARDS, ANYWAY?

WHY ARE THE ORCS SO FEEVED AT YOU, QUEEN BERTHA?

I DON'T KNOW. WE'VE NEVER HAD A PROBLEM WITH THEM BEFORE...





CENTURIES AGO, MY ANCESTOR, KING LEOPOLD INGEBRECHT IX, MADE PEACE WITH THE ORCISH TRIBES AFTER A PROTRACTED CONFLICT. IN FACT, MY KINGDOM ENCOMPASSES THE LANDS THAT THE ORCS CAPTURED DURING THE WAR.

THESE RELICS SURROUNDING THE MAP ARE TROPHIES TAKEN FROM VARIOUS BATTLES FOUGHT BY LEOPOLD HIMSELF!

WHO RULES LOWER ANSERINTIA?

ORCISH LANDS

UPPER ANSERINTIA

LOWER ANSERINTIA

THAT WOULD BE MY BROTHER, EDDIE. WHEN LEOPOLD MADE PEACE WITH THE ORCS, THE TREATY STIPULATED THAT THE HOUSE OF INGEBRECHT MUST RULE A DIVIDED KINGDOM. EDDIE AND I ARE THE LAST OF THE INGEBRECHTS.

UH... SO WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU BOTH SHUFFLE OFF THIS MORTAL CROWN?

WITH NO HEIRS, I SUPPOSE CHAOS WILL REIGN.

WELL, AT LEAST SOMEONE WILL BE IN CHARGE...

YOU SAID THAT A SCOUT BROUGHT NEWS OF THE ORCISH THREAT?

YES. HE WAS ON A MISSION FOR MY BROTHER. EDDIE LIKES TO KEEP TABS ON OUR NEIGHBORS.

SADLY, THE SCOUT DIED SHORTLY AFTER SENDING HIS REPORT TO LOWER ANSERINTIA VIA MESSENGER. EDDIE HAD THE REPORT MADE KNOWN TO ME mere HOURS AFTER RECEIVING IT.

SO, CAN WE SEE THE SCOUT?

ER, I DID MENTION THAT HE'S DEAD, DIDN'T I?

NOT A PROBLEM!

AH, WELL, I'LL HAVE MY LORD CHAMBERLAIN SHOW YOU THE WAY.













SEVERAL FRANTIC FOOTFALLS LATER...

WHEN! I THINK  
WE'VE LOST THEM!  
LET'S REST HERE.

WHY  
HERE?



WHILE  
PIFFANY FIRES  
OUR HENCHMAN,  
LET'S SEE WHAT  
THE WAR CHEST  
HAS TO OFFER!

COMIN'  
UP!



AH! CHEMICAL  
WARFARE. THIS VIAL  
CONTAINS A SUBSTANCE  
DESIGNED TO REPEL MOST  
NON-HUMANS WITH A VILE,  
SICKENING ODOR.

HEY! IT ALSO  
COMES WITH A MINI-  
A.T.L.A.S. CATAPULT  
KIT! NEATO!



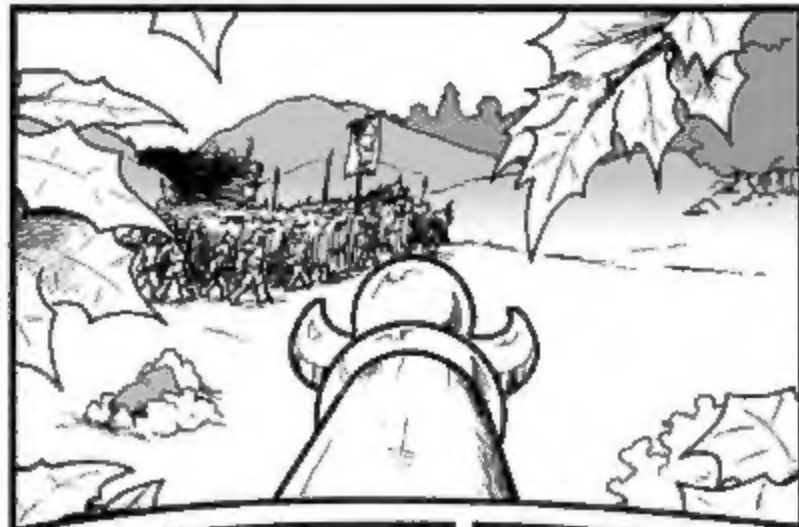
LATER...

READY  
TO FIRE?

ALL SYSTEMS  
GO!

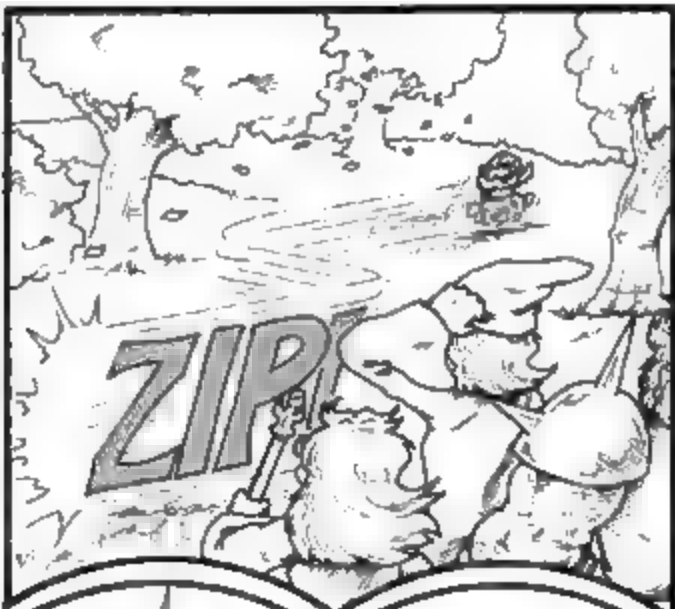
HOW DOES THE  
TRAJECTORY LOOK,  
PIFFANY?





IF YOU'LL  
EXCUSE ME, I HAVE  
TO SAVE MYSELF FOR  
MARRIAGE...

...AND PRACTICALLY  
EVERYTHING ELSE.



THIS IS  
HORRIBLE!

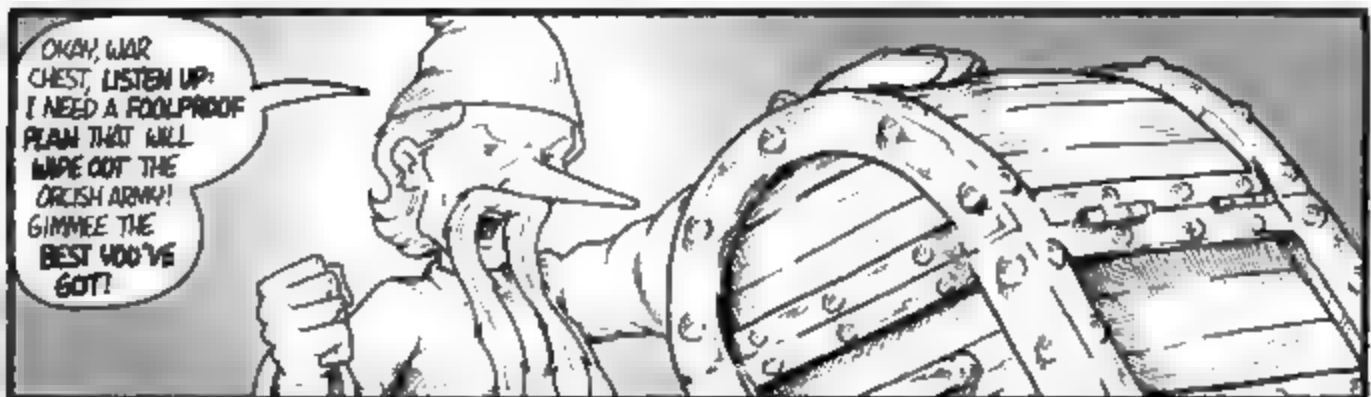
I KNOW.  
HE'S LEADING THEM  
STRAIGHT TO ANSERVIA.

AT THE END OF A TRAIL OF LUSTY DESTRUCTION...

...THEN I  
ASKED IF WE COULD  
JUST BE FRIENDS,  
AND IT WENT  
DOWNHILL FROM  
THERE.

IT  
ALWAYS  
DOES!

OKAY, WAR  
CHEST, LISTEN UP!  
I NEED A FOOLPROOF  
PLAN THAT WILL  
WAPE OUT THE  
ORCISH ARMY!  
GIMMEE THE  
BEST YOU'VE  
GOT!





# PLAN 3

ONE: PUSH RED BUTTON.  
TWO: DUCK AND COVER.  
CAUTION: SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE ROVING BANDS OF BLOODTHIRSTY MUTANTS--

**FIND A DIFFERENT PLAN!!**

WHERE DID YOU GET THIS "WAR CHEST," ANYWAY?

AND IT CAME TO YOU LIKE THIS?

THERE WERE PARTS LEFT OVER, WEREN'T THERE?

WELL, I... SENT AWAY FOR IT.

UH, NOT EXACTLY. IT CAME IN A BOX LABELED "SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED."

HEY, IT'S NOT MY FAULT THAT THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE IN HIEROGLYPHS!

WHAT'S THAT UNDER THE FINE PRINT?

I THINK IT'S A TECHNICAL SUPPORT HOTLINE.

OKAY, READ IT OFF TO ME AND WE'LL GET SOME EXPERT ADVICE.





HEH... WELL, HERE'S THE SITUATION: MY COLLEAGUES AND I ARE TRYING TO STOP AN ORCISH ARMY THAT NUMBERS ABOUT TEN THOUSAND STRONG.

OOOH, THAT'S A TOUGHIE! WHAT FORCES ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL?

I'M A WIZARD. THE REST OF MY COMPANY INCLUDES A WARRIOR AND A CLERIC. OH, WE ALSO HAVE A HENCHMAN.

THAT'S IT? DOUSIE, WHO'D YOU GOT SCREENIN' THESE CALLS?! GIVE US PROBLEMS THAT WE HAVE A CHANCE OF SOLVING, WILL YA?! JEEZE!

OKAY, SO A DIRECT ATTACK IS MOST DEFINITELY OUT. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE ARMY ITSELF? ARE THERE ANY DISTINGUISHING MARKINGS?

THEY HAVE A STANDARD. IT'S A RED FIELD WITH A HORNED SKULL—

WELL DUN! THEY'RE ORCS! THEY ALL HAVE SKULLS ON THEIR STANDARDS. I THINK IT'S A TRIBAL LAW.

WHAT ABOUT THE TOP OF THE STANDARD? THERE SHOULD BE AN ICON MADE OF GOLD OR SILVER PRESENT. IT'LL PROBABLY HAVE, WHAT? A SKULL MOTIF!

NOPE. THERE'S NOTHING ON TOP.

I'VE GOT IT. I'VE GOT IT!

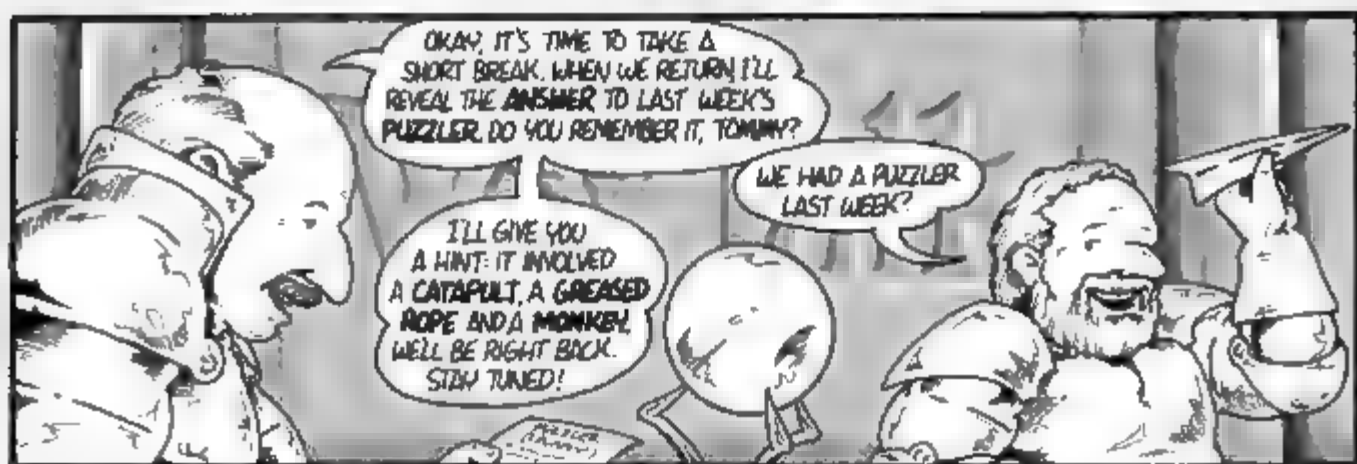
ME, TOO! THEY NEED TO FIND A NEW SKULL ICON FOR THE ORCS!

FIRST, YOU SHOULD DECAPITATE THAT HENCHMAN OF YOURS—

NO, YOU KNUCKLEHEAD! SOMEONE'S TAKEN THE CHIEF'S BATTLE TOTEM! HE SPENT HIS WHOLE LIFE CRAFTING THE THING FROM VALUABLES HE TOOK ON THE BATTLEFIELD. IT ALWAYS ADORNS HIS STANDARD UNLESS IT'S BEEN, WHAT?

STOLEN! HE'S PROBABLY OUT TO GET MEDIEVAL ON WHOEVER TOOK IT!









UM, KRIMPERSH  
ARMINTIBUS XTUM!  
THROW DE PIM WRMS  
BEACPIRMS!

"GRIMWARSH COMMANDS GLUE!  
THROW UP AND DRESS BACKWARDS!"



RN XSRDGO!  
I KLETP!

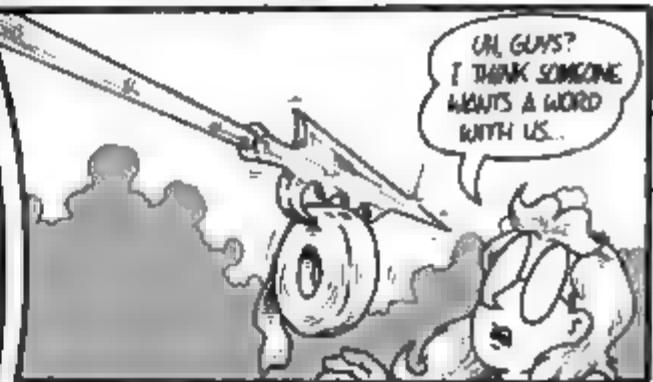


WHAT  
DID HE  
SAY?

"OH, GOODY!  
A PIRATE!"



I GUESS I'LL  
GET SOME MORE  
DUCT TAPE READY.  
IF YOU GUYS COULD  
KEEP TRACK OF ANY  
LOOSE PARTS...



UM, GUYS?  
I THINK SOMEONE  
WANTS A WORD  
WITH US...



LOOK, I APPRECIATE WHAT  
YOU'RE TRYING TO DO, BUT IT'S  
NO LONGER NECESSARY.

HUH? WHAT  
ARE YOU DOING  
HERE, LORD  
CHAMBERLAIN?

I THOUGHT  
WE WERE HIRED  
TO STOP A WAR.  
GRANTED, WE'VE  
MEREPLY ANNOYED  
THE WAR SO FAR,  
BUT WE...



YOU WERE HIRED TO  
TRY, AND SO YOU HAVE.  
HERE IS YOUR PAYMENT,  
WITH A CONSIDERABLE BONUS  
TO COVER YOUR MENCHMAN'S  
MEDICAL NEEDS.



NOW BE ON YOUR WAY  
AND NO FURTHER DISTRESS  
WILL COME TO YOU...





I ASSURE YOU, CHIEF KURG, THAT I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

AND I ASSURE YOU, KURG, THAT I WILL BROOK NO AGGRESSION AGAINST MY SISTER'S LANDS! MY FORCES ARE MASSING AS WE SPEAK!

AS YOU SEE, I AM NOT CAUGHT UNAWARES! KING INGLEBRECHT'S SCOUT BROUGHT NEWS OF YOUR ARMY. WE ARE PREPARED FOR YOUR HORDES.

NOTHING WILL KEEP ME FROM RECLAIMING MY HA'DORATH! MY WAR TOTEM!

EVEN NOW IT ADORNIS YOUR WALL AS AN AFFRONT TO MY HONOR!

WHAT? I DON'T RECALL THAT BEING THERE BEFORE. I ADMIT THAT I DON'T OFTEN LOOK AT THE TROPHIES...

IT WAS STOLEN FROM MY FORTRESS BY A HAIRY-FACED THIEF IN A GRAY CLOAK! MY BEST TRACKERS FOLLOWED HIM HERE, WHERE I FIND IT HUNG AS A MERE TROPHY!

I WILL HAVE VENGEANCE!

A GRAY CLOAK AND HAIRY FACE... REPHAN?

REPHAN IS NO THIEF! HE'S ONE OF MY BEST SCOUTS! HE WAS...

HA! I SEE NOW THE DISHONOR YOU BRING TO YOUR OWN BLOOD! YOU SOUGHT TO CAUSE A WAR BETWEEN MY PEOPLE AND QUEEN INGLEBRECHT! YOU'D THEN HAVE A CONVENIENT EXCUSE TO SLAY ORCS AND TAKE YOUR SISTER'S LANDS!

THIS PLOY HAS FAILED! I WILL MAKE SURE THAT YOU WILL NEVER THREATEN ANYONE AGAIN, KING INGLEBRECHT!!



OH, BRA-VO! YOU'RE A GREAT ACTOR, CHIEF! YOU'RE NOT BAD, EITHER, KING EDDIE. I'M AFRAID THAT QUEEN BERTHA NEEDS TO SPEND MORE TIME IN SUMMER STOCK THEATER IF SHE EVER WANTS TO FOOL ANYONE.



WHAT? YOU DARE TO ACCUSE ME OF DUPLICITY?!



WILL YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON?

OKAY, EVERYONE POP SOME ASPIRIN; THIS IS GOING TO GET A LITTLE COMPLICATED.

PIFFANN, TAKE SOME NOTES, IF YOU PLEASE?



ORIGINALLY, THE KING WERE SENT REPHAN TO KILL KURG. REPHAN IS, IN REALITY, AN ASSASSIN. I FIGURED IT OUT WHEN I REALIZED THAT HE WAS FENGHNING DEATH BY USING A RARE POISON. ONLY A PROFESSIONAL KILLER WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO SUCH CHEMICALS. HE WAS HIRED TO OFF KURG AND FRAME THE QUEEN. THE ORCS WOULD'VE INVDED, AND KING EDDIE WOULD BE FREE TO MOVE IN, DRIVING OUT THE ORCS AND RULING A NEWLY UNITED ANSERTINIA.



HOWEVER, KING-BOY DIDN'T KNOW THAT REPHAN WAS IN QUEEN BERTHA'S EMPLOY. REPHAN REVEALED THE KING'S PLAN TO HER, AND SHE MODIFIED IT. SHE HAD HIM SWIPE THE WAR TOTEM, MAKING IT SEEM LIKE HER BROTHER WANTED A WAR TO SEIZE HER LANDS. THIS WOULD GIVE HER JUST CAUSE TO TURN HER FORCES ON HER BROTHER WITH A NEW ALLY...



CHIEF KURG. HE, TOO WAS PART OF THIS SCHEME. HE ALLOWED THE THEFT OF HIS TOTEM BECAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY WAY HE COULD GET IT TO HIS BRIDE. ORCS GIVE THESE TOTEMS TO THOSE THEY WANT TO MARRY. NOW, AN OPEN MARRIAGE BETWEEN AN ORC AND A HUMAN WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO BOTH RACES. UNLESS...



...THE MARRIAGE WAS USED TO SEAL A TREATY TO END A PROTRACTED WAR. A TREATY THAT WOULD UNITE TWO KINGDOMS AND THE ORCISH TRIBAL LANDS UNDER ONE HOUSE.



A HOUSE RULED BY KING KURG AND QUEEN INGLEDRECHT!

UH, BERTHA? SIS?  
YOU WANT TO, AH...  
MARRY KURG?

IT'S TRUE. I WOULDN'T OBJECT  
TOO MUCH, EDDIE. ORCISH WEDDING  
TRADITIONS ARE KIND OF HARSH WITH  
PROTESTORS. "SPEAK NOW AND FOREVER  
REST IN PIECES," IS THE PHRASE, I THINK.

THIS IS  
EIGHTEEN  
DIFFERENT FLAVORS  
OF DISGUSTING.

WHAT CAN I  
SAY? I DIG BRUTISH  
GUYS IN LEATHER!

SO YOU SOUGHT TO  
END MY LIFE WITH  
A COWARDLY  
ASSASSIN?

YOU AREN'T  
WORTH A REAL  
WAR! I COULD  
ROUT YOUR ORCS  
WITH A SQUAD OF  
SCHOOLKIDS  
ARMED WITH  
SPITWADS!

BRING IT  
ON, YOU WEAK,  
PINK-SKINNED--

BOW BEFORE  
YOUR NEW  
SOVEREIGN!

I, REPHAN,  
CLAIM THE  
THRONE OF  
ANSERINIA  
AS--

ER, WHY HAVEN'T  
THESE PEOPLE BEEN ALLOWED  
TO KILL EACH OTHER?

THEY'RE NOT  
DONE BICKERING  
YET.

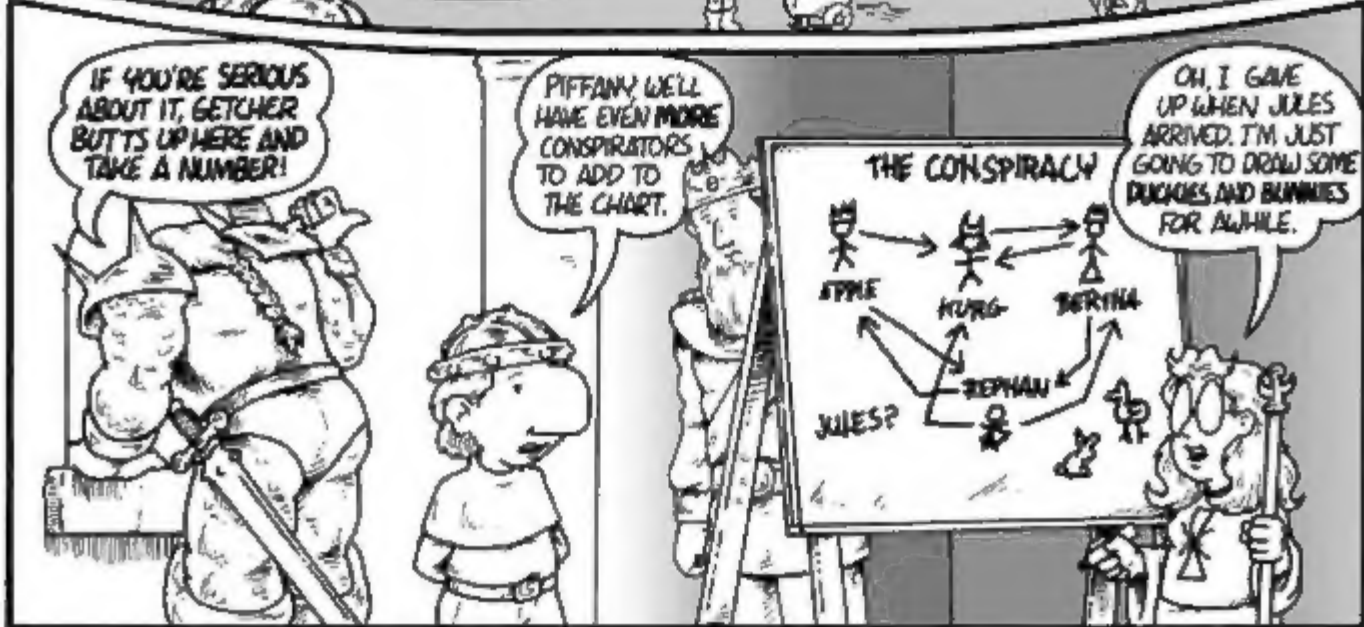
BUT FORGET  
THAT! WHAT  
CLAIM DO YOU  
HAVE TO THE  
THRONE? YOU'RE  
A MERCINAR--

HARDLY!  
I'M THE FOURTH COUSIN TO  
THOSE INGLEBRECHT YANOOKS!  
AS SOON AS THEY FINISH EACH  
OTHER OFF, I'LL BE KING!

I WOULD'VE WAITED  
UNTIL AFTER THEY WERE  
DEAD TO REVEAL MY  
CLEVER PLOT.

OOPS.







## WHO WANTS TO BE A TYRANT?







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&  
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